

# LASCA LEAVES



Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

## LIBRARY ANNEX SOON COMPLETE, VISITORS CENTER WORK BEGINS

CONSTRUCTION BEGAN in December on an addition to the library building at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. If everything goes according to plans, the addition should be finished by early April when construction activity will shift to the present gatehouse. This sequence is necessary because the tour guides and graphic artists who now occupy offices in the gatehouse

will move into the library addition, clearing the way for the new visitor orientation center in the renovated gatehouse. Work is scheduled to begin on this phase later in April.

The library addition is Phase I of the entrance renovation project financed by the California Arboretum Foundation's matching funds program. Construction will add three new offices as well as remodel several existing rooms on the east side of the building. Staff artists will move into one of the offices while the public

relations office will occupy the second.

About one-third of the added floor space will be devoted to housing the computer system as it expands in the future. In the 18 months since the Foundation acquired the computer, its utilization has continued to grow, necessitating a separate room with an independent climate control system.

Although the addition will cover about 800 square feet, it will intrude only slightly into the public garden, since it is built mostly atop the library's underground heating and air conditioning plant. The painted masonry exterior will blend with the new rotunda and existing library building. Along the east side near the main walk, a new trellis will soften the roofline and tie the building visually to other landscape details in the vicinity.

Pederson, Beckhart, Wesley & Stice, architects for the first phase, also designed Phase II that will transform the old gatehouse into a visitor orientation center. In a new video viewing area, visitors will get their first glimpse of Arboretum highlights during different seasons. Plans call for an interactive video system that on will, on command, answer questions about the Arboretum and give information about coming events. Glass display cases will contain changing exhibits of



Lu Ann B. Munns

*The three-room addition being built along the east side of the library will add almost 800 square feet to the building.*



plants or artifacts that add detail and dimension to a trip around the Arboretum grounds.

To prepare for the orientation center, the contractors will gut the gatehouse, leaving only exterior walls and two supporting columns in place. After the interior has been opened up, a track lighting grid will be installed, excess windows blocked off and a double-door entry installed in place of the present ticket windows. Diffused light will reflect off the ceiling from fixtures in the lowered soffit, giving the entire center museum quality lighting.

The library addition and visitor orientation center are only two of the many improvements made possible

by the Foundation's matching funds program. Those of you who use the Arboretum regularly have probably already noticed several completed projects. Matching funds raised by the Foundation financed renovation of the Lecture Hall, the koi pond observation deck, concrete walks near the greenhouses and on Tallac Knoll, upgrading of the Demonstration Home Gardens, resurfacing all the inside roads and the new entrance signs.

Among the other projects slated to begin as contributions come in are five interpretive centers throughout the grounds, a refurbished entranceway vista, parking lot expansion, and a new water conservation garden.

## CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE DRAWS 1,000 HISTORY ENTHUSIASTS

A SUMMER-LIKE DAY and more than 1,000 visitors greeted the Las Voluntarias y Ayudantes staffing the Queen Anne Cottage Open House on Dec. 15. Siby (Mrs. Perry) Minton coordinated the 65 volunteers who either decorated the buildings Friday or led tours on Sunday. Docents provided visitors with information and historical highlights in the Coach Barn, Santa Anita Depot and the Cottage. Throughout the busy afternoon, patient visitors, many with the entire family in tow, waited as much as an hour in line to tour the interior of the Cottage.

This year the focus of interest seemed to radiate outward from the Cottage through the entire historical section. In the Coach Barn an exhibit of Chinese mementos was "the hit of the show," according to curator Sandra Snider. Many Oriental visitors enjoyed the collection so much that they set about translating letters written by "Lucky" Baldwin's Chinese employees, revealing poignant glimpses of personal lives that were quite different from that of their famous boss. One young man even claimed to be the great-grandson of Baldwin's Chinese herbalist.

In the Santa Anita Depot, Peg (Mrs. Thomas) Dorr and her cadre of 16 docent guides were busy all day showing off the interior and explaining the historical items on display. The railroad lanterns, vintage luggage, and century-old packing crates were easy enough to recognize, but without the docents' knowledge who could identify "beer bumpers"? These large rubber disks once cushioned kegs of beer being unloaded from trains. Another popular exhibit was a photographic chronology of the Depot, documenting changes in the building and its setting from the time it was built, on through its heyday and subsequent abandonment until the final reconstruction

## RECENT LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

**AMA Handbook of Poisonous and Injurious Plants**, by Kenneth F. Lampe and Mary Ann McCann. Chicago, American Medical Assn., 1985.

**Ball Red Book: Greenhouse Growing**, ed. by Vic Ball. Reston, Va., Reston Publ. Co., 1985.

**Bonsai: Its Art, Science, History and Philosophy**, by Deborah R. Koreshoff. Portland, Ore., Timber Press, 1984.

**Children's Gardens: A Field Guide for Teachers, Parents and Volunteers**, by Elizabeth Bremner and John Pusey. Univ. of California Coop. Ext., Common Ground Garden Program.

**Container Gardening**. 4th ed. Menlo Park, Calif., Lane, 1984.

**The Cottage Garden**, by Roy Genders. New ed. London, Pelham.

**Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms of Canada**, by J. Walton Groves. Ottawa, Agriculture Canada, 1979.

**Herb Garden Design**, by Faith H. Swanson and Virginia B. Rady. Hanover, N.H., University Press of New England, 1984.

**Herbs: an Indexed Bibliography, 1971-1980**. The scientific literature on selected herbs, and aromatic and medicinal plants of the temperate zone, by James E. Simon, Alena F. Chadwick, and Lyle E. Craker. Hamden, Ct., Archon Books, 1984.

**Hummingbirds: Their Life and Behavior**. A photographic study of the North American species, by Esther Quesada Tyrrell and Robert A. Tyrrell. New York, Crown, 1985.

**Ortho Problem Solver**, ed. by Michael D. Smith. 2nd ed. San Francisco, Ortho Information Services, 1984.

**The Overlook Water Gardener's Handbook**, by Philip Swindells. Woodstock, N.Y., Overlook Press, 1984.

**Peppers: the Domesticated Capsicums**, by Jean Andrews. Austin, Univ. of Texas Press, 1984.

**Perennials: How to Select, Grow & Enjoy**, by Pamela Harper and Frederick McGourty. Tucson, Ariz., HPBooks, 1985.

**Flowers of the Himalaya**, by Oleg Polunin and Adam Stainton. Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 1984.

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on the Arboretum grounds.

Although the Open House raised \$1,042 for restoration work in the historical section, the volunteers' main motivation was public service. "So many people are interested," said Ms. Snider, "so we thought it would be nice if they didn't have to wait two years to see all the fascinating material that is normally hidden away in storage."

### NEW SIGNS ANNOUNCE GARDEN TO BALDWIN AVE. MOTORISTS

THANKS to the California Arboretum Foundation's matching funds program, the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum now has two new signs that make the entrance more visible to motorists whizzing past on Baldwin Avenue.

Late in December a crane lifted into place the two signs that had taken almost four months to build. New lights were also installed to make them visible to night-time motorists.

Letters covered in gold leaf and stylized flowers in a twining pattern stand out against a dark background of carved and sandblasted clear grain redwood. David Bottom from Total Graphics, the company that made the signs, said the gold covered aluminum letters will be unaffected in the future even if the kiln dried wood should crack as it weathers.

A wrought iron standard supports the double-sided smaller sign overhanging Baldwin Avenue that features a track for sliding panels to hold coming events information. David Henry, also from Total Graphics, said that the other sign that faces east is, at 9 by 12 feet, the largest solid wood sign yet designed by that company.

The signs are part of the overall upgrading of the entrance that will give visitors a better first impression of what they can expect when they come to the Arboretum.



Sandra Snider

*Sibby (Mrs. Perry) Minton, wearing a century-old sleepwear outfit, poses among the Christmas decorations that were viewed by more than 1,000 visitors during the Queen Anne Open House.*



Lu Ann B. Munns

*Workers strain to right the new entrance sign as a crane lowers the sign and its wrought iron support into place.*



## SALE PLANT LIST EXPANDS AS BALDWIN BONANZA NEARS

THE GROWING HOUSES at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum will yield up some real gardening treasures for Baldwin Bonanza XVI on May 4. Although quantities of each are limited, the selection is wide enough to assure all shoppers at least some of the special plants on their lists.

Gardeners looking for a particular tree, for instance, may want to survey that section first for the best possible chance of bagging their quarry. This year four grafted cultivars of the floss silk tree (*Chorisia speciosa*) will be available: 'Arcadia,' 'LASCA Beauty,' 'Los Angeles,' and 'September Splendor.'

Other trees with spectacular flowers that will be for sale are the Chinese fringe tree (*Chionanthus retusa*), the red silk-cotton tree (*Bombax ceiba*), several yellow flowered cassia tree species and both the lavender and golden trumpet trees (*Tabebuia impetiginosa* and *T. chrysotricha*). If you are shopping for different, moderate-sized flowering trees, look for a coral tree (*Erythrina sykesii*), the purple orchid tree (*Bauhinia variegata*) or the weeping bottlebush (*Callistemon viminalis*). One

tree for sale that provides color, not from flowers but from its fall leaves, is the snakebark maple (*Acer capillipes*).

Cymbidiums will top the list of easily grown plants flowering just in time for Mother's Day. You can choose from an entire range of colors and plant sizes.

Houseplant collectors and greenhouse owners will find a kaleidoscope of tempting plants. Does your taste run to striped or splotched foliage? Then look for *Schefflera* 'Golden Elf,' *Hibiscus rosa sinensis* 'Cooperi' or one of the dracaenas such as *D. deremensis* 'Hawaiian Gold.' Easily grown *Philodendron elegans* will compete for attention with the more demanding *Anthurium* and *Costus* species, tropical plants that sport colorful, distinctive flowers.

The palm collection will again offer a wide selection of tropical specimens for the indoors such as the sealing wax palm (*Cyrtostachys lakka*) or garden palms like *Neodypsis decaryi*. For other, drier spots choose succulents, for instance, *Echeveria*

*racemosa* var. *citrina* or the California native *Dudleya brittonii*.

The list of tempting plants will soon expand as shipments begin arriving from specialty growers across the country. Just be sure to shop early because the choicest plants are the first to go.

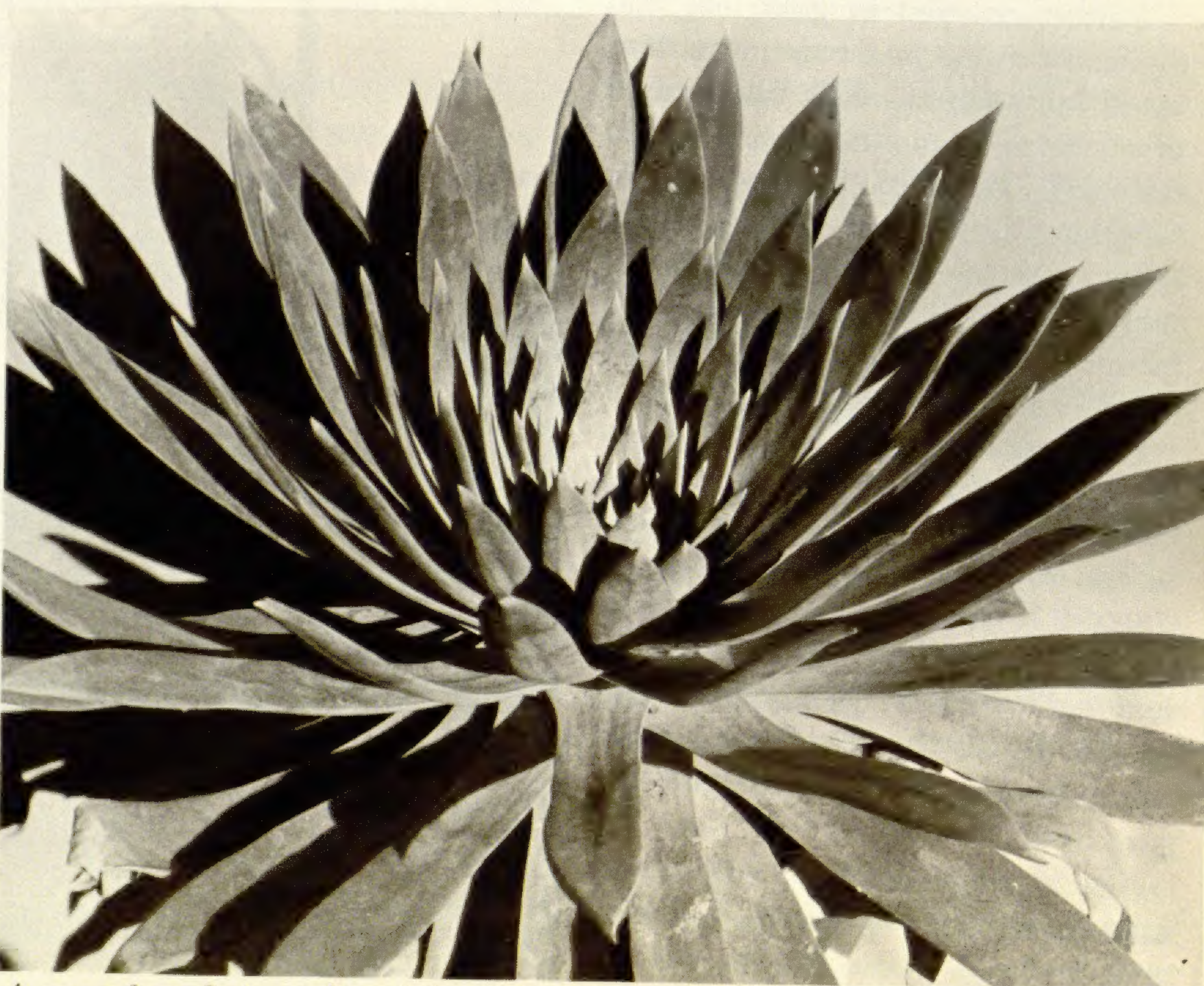


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Several sizes of the sealing wax palm (*Cyrtostachys lakka*) will be for sale.



The spiky foliage of *Philodendron elegans* mimics that of several other unrelated plant families.



Lu Ann B. Munns

A succulent being offered for sale, *Dudleya brittonii*, is good for rock gardens or dry areas outdoors or as a houseplant.



# The Livistona Palms

By EDWARD MURRAY



AMONG THE MOST decorative and useful palms for Southern California gardening are the livistonas. Along with the washingtonias, trachycarpus, and chamaerops, these are among the large group of palms with fan-shaped or palmate leaves that are nearly circular in outline and cut toward the center into a few to many leaf segments. Among

the palms that are reliably hardy and dependable here, the livistonas are notable for their generally small size in relation to the average home and the tendency of several to have leaves with weeping leaf segments giving them the graceful effect of a fountain or a lacy open appearance. The name *Livistona* was chosen to commemorate Patrick Murray, Baron

of Livistone, founder of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Scotland.

The genus *Livistona* contains about 28 species native over an area from tropical and subtropical Asia through Malaya to Australia and the Philippine Islands. Twenty of the species are native to Australia, and of these, eight are as yet to be named and de-



*Fluttering tips of the divided leaf segments distinguish this central cluster of Livistona decipiens from nearby*

*specimens in the Palm and Bamboo Section.*





These 30-year-old Chinese fountain palms (*Livistona chinensis*) will slowly grow to a height of about 15 feet in Southern California.

scribed by taxonomists. In addition to the palmate leaves, these species are grouped together by such features as spinose teeth along part or the entire length of the leaf stalk, blades that are deeply divided and then further split into two segments, flower stalks among the leaves, and by many features of the small green flowers.

According to the Sunset New Western Garden Book, four species are in cultivation in the West. *Livistona australis* is the hardiest species of the genus, tolerating temperatures as low as 20 degrees Fahrenheit. In eastern Australia where it is native, it may reach a height of 80 feet, but here it grows to 50 feet. Its circular dark green leaves are 3-5 feet in diameter and are divided more than halfway into 70 cleft segments. Commonly called the "cabbage palm," it was put to many uses by the Aborigines. Both they and later settlers felled these palms to harvest the "cabbage" or "heart" at the growing tip for use as food.

*Livistona chinensis*, the most frequently cultivated species, is called Chinese fan palm or Chinese fountain palm. The stout trunk may eventually reach a height of 15 feet. The bright green leaves can reach a diameter of 3 to 6 feet; they fall away cleanly from the trunk with age. A large central undivided surface contrasts with the hanging outer portion, the effect which gave rise to the name fountain palm. This beautiful and hardy species prefers well-drained moist soil with supplemental water during dry spells. Three different accessions of this species can be found in the Palm and Bamboo Section including a dramatic planting of three individuals in a tight group. This species has been used for centuries in China for fan-making.

*Livistona decipiens* is native to the state of Queensland, Australia, along stream banks, in eucalyptus forests and along the margins of the rainforest, often in sandy soils where groundwater is accessible. It is a

handsome species with a tall, narrow trunk to 30-40 feet high and a large crown of strongly weeping fronds. It prefers well-drained, moist soil with extra water during a drought. Young plants benefit from regular fertilizing. At the north end of the Palm and Bamboo Section in L5/SE there is an impressive grove of eight individuals.

*Livistona mariae*, the Central Australian cabbage palm, becomes a tall palm 80-100 feet high in its native habitat but grows slowly to 15-25 feet in our area. The total wild population consisting of about 3,000 plants occurs in the Finke River Valley of the McDonnell Range in Central Australia, 600 miles from any other palms. As a stranded relic of more salubrious times, it is analagous to our nearby *Washingtonia* palms of Palm Springs and northern Baja California. Another common name, the bronze fan palm, alludes to the bronzy red leaves of young plants; mature foliage is bluish-green. As with *L. australis* the heart of this palm was harvested by the Aborigines along with tender young leaves for food.

In addition, three other species are presently growing in the Arboretum, all planted out last summer. *Livistona merrillii* from the Philippines was planted in P6 and P7. *Livistona rigida* was planted in P7 and P8. This native of tropical Australia is similar in many respects to *L. mariae*. Young plants in our collection are exceedingly handsome with wine-red leaves. Finally, there is one accession of *L. saribus*, the taraw palm from Southeast Asia, Indonesia and the Philippine Islands. Considering its tropical homelands, it has thus far adapted well to Southern California. This species is said to produce dramatic trusses of brilliant blue fruits, each about one-half inch in diameter.

Due primarily to the recent collecting efforts of Loran Whitelock over an extensive part of the Austral-



ian continent, there are now seeds or seedlings of several new and very interesting species that will eventually make their way into our plantings. These include *L. drudei*, endemic to a narrow coastal area in the state of Queensland. Its features include a smooth, pale trunk and shiny leaves with black bases on the leafstalk. *Livistona eastonii* is a slender palm growing only 15-25 feet high with persistent leaf bases and light green leaves. It is endemic to the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. *Livistona inermis*, likewise a very slender smallish species with a sparse crown of delicate leaves, is found only in the Northern Territory. The last named species is *L. loriphylla*, named with reference to the very slender leaf segments with a similarity to ribbons. This is another slender *Livistona* with divided fronds and drooping segments.

However, there are three additional species, all unnamed, which Mr. Whitelock has donated to the Arboretum. *Livistona* sp. 'Blackdown' is endemic to the Blackdown Tableland of central Queensland. This very distinct species is most handsome in having new leaves rusty golden brown on the underside. These leaves expand to become 3-4 feet across, flat, and gray-green in color. *Livistona* sp. 'Carnarvon' from Queensland has a slender trunk, shiny green leaves with drooping tips and bright yellow flowers. Finally, *L. sp.* 'Kingleopold' was collected in the mountain range by this name in Western Australia.

Also in the collection are seedlings of *L. muelleri* of Queensland, Australia and *L. rotundifolia* from Indonesia and the Philippine Islands.

You are invited to enjoy the collection of livistonas in the Palm and Bamboo Section at the Arboretum.

*Spent fronds of Livistona mariae eventually fall away cleanly, exposing the smooth grey trunk.*





There we can look forward to the growth and maturation of several new plantings and watch for the placement of still others. You may well find that one or more of these most attractive palms will prove suitable for your own landscaping needs.

*Edward Murray obtained his PhD at Pennsylvania State University. (Photography by James Bauml)*

## BOOKS (Continued from page 2)

- Plants of the Bible**, by Michael Zohary. Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982.
- CRC Handbook of Medicinal Herbs**, by James A. Duke. Boca Raton, Fla., CRC Press, 1985.
- Plantas Vasculares de la Argentina**, nativas y exóticas, by Osvaldo Boelcke. Buenos Aires, FEDIC, 1981.
- Plantas de la Flora Argentina Empleadas en Medicina Popular**, by Enrique L. Ratera and Miguel O. Ratera. Buenos Aires, Editorial Hemisferio Sur, 1980.
- Plantas Medicinales de la Argentina**, by Martin Toursarkissian. Buenos Aires, Editorial Hemisferio Sur, 1980.
- Flora of Cyprus**, by R. D. Meikle. Vol. 2. Kew, Engl., Bentham-Moxon Trust, 1985.
- World of Iridaceae**, by Clive Innes. Ashington, Engl., Holly Gate International, 1985.
- Flora of Turkey**, vol. 9, ed. by P. H. Davis. Edinburgh, University Press, 1985.
- The Masters' Book of Ikebana**, ed. by Donald Richie & Meredith Weatherby. Tokyo, Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, 1966.

## LOS ANGELES STATE & COUNTY ARBORETUM, Arcadia

- MARCH 15 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FAIR  
California Arboretum Foundation
- MAR. 21, 22, 23 — FRI. 12 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sat. & Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Orchid Show  
Southland Orchid Show Committee
- MARCH 29, 30 — Sat. 1 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Specialty Iris Show  
Aril Society International
- APRIL 5, 6 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Bonsai Show  
Shohin Bonsai Society
- APRIL 12, 13 — Sat. 12 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Amaryllis Show  
Southern California Hemerocallis and Amaryllis Society
- APRIL 19, 20 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Cactus and Succulent Show  
San Gabriel Valley Cactus and Succulent Society
- APRIL 26, 27 — Sat. 1 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Rose Show  
Pacific Rose Society
- MAY 4 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
BALDWIN BONANZA  
Benefit Plant Sale  
California Arboretum Foundation
- MAY 10, 11 — Sat. 12 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Geranium Show  
International Geranium Society  
Los Angeles Branch

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MARCH, APRIL, MAY, 1986

- MAY 18 — 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Epiphyllum Show  
Epiphyllum Society of America
- MAY 31, JUNE 1 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Azalea Show  
Valley Satsuki Azalea Society  
*All events sponsored by the California Arboretum Foundation*

## DESCANSO GARDENS, La Canada Flintridge

- MARCH 8, 9 — Sat. 12 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Art Show  
Sierra Madres Girl Scout Council
- MARCH 22, 23 — Sat. 2 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Daffodil Show  
Southern California Daffodil Society
- MARCH 27 thru APRIL 6 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
SPRING FLOWER SHOW  
Descanso Gardens Guild
- APRIL 19, 20 — 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Rose Show  
San Fernando Valley Rose Society
- MAY 10, 11 — Sat. 12 to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
Geranium Show  
International Geranium Society — Southwest Branch

### MAY 18 — 2:30 p.m.

Performing Arts Program  
Descanso Gardens Guild

### MAY 25 — 2:30 p.m.

Performing Arts Program  
Descanso Gardens Guild  
*All events sponsored by the Descanso Gardens Guild*

## SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN, Palos Verdes Peninsula

- MARCH 2 — 2 p.m.**  
Vegetable Gardening Lecture  
Jean Jacyna
- MARCH 9 — 2 p.m.**  
Flower Arranging Demonstration  
Helen Gates, Master Judge  
National Council of State Garden Clubs
- MARCH 16 — 2 p.m.**  
Terrarium Demonstration  
Bea Sutton
- MARCH 23 — 2 p.m.**  
Plant Propagation Demonstration  
Linda Farrier, SCBG Propagation Workshop Chairman
- APRIL 12-13 — Sat. 1 to 5 p.m.**  
**Sun. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
Costa Verde Flower Show  
Costa Verde District — California Garden Clubs, Inc.
- APRIL 20 — 2 p.m.**  
Palos Verdes Symphonic Band  
Richard Schwalbe, Director  
*All events sponsored by the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation*